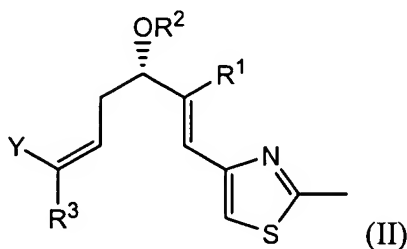


Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Claims 1-58 (Canceled)

59. (Previously presented) A compound of formula II



wherein

- R¹ is C₁-C₄ alkyl,
R² is benzyl, p-methoxybenzyl (PMB), trimethyl-silyl, 2-(trimethylsilyl)ethoxymethyl (SEM), tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl, benzyloxymethoxymethyl, benzoyl, or acetyl,
R³ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl,
Y is CO₂R⁴, CHO, CH=CH₂ or CH₂R⁵,
R⁴ is C₁-C₄ alkyl or an optionally substituted benzyl group,
R⁵ is halogen, hydroxy, p-toluenesulfonate or -OSO₂B, and
B is C₁-C₄ alkyl or C₁-C₄ perfluoroalkyl.

60. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein

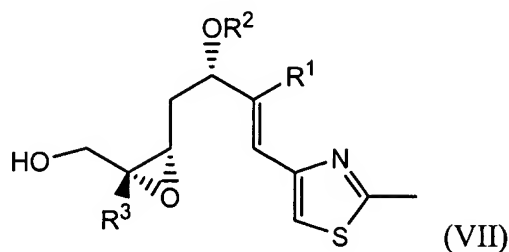
- R¹ is C₁-C₄ alkyl,
R² is p-methoxybenzyl,
R³ is methyl,
Y is CO₂R⁴, and
R⁴ is C₁-C₄ alkyl.

61. (Currently amended) A compound according to claim ~~69~~ 59, wherein

- R¹ is C₁-C₄ alkyl,
R² is p-methoxybenzyl,

R³ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl, and
Y is CO₂-ethyl.

62. (Previously presented) A compound of formula VII



wherein

- R¹ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl,
R² is benzyl, p-methoxybenzyl (PMB), trimethyl-silyl-2-(trimethylsilyl)ethoxymethyl (SEM), tetrahydropyranyl, methoxymethyl, benzyloxymethoxymethyl, benzoyl, or acetyl, and
R³ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl.

63. (Previously presented) A compound of formula VII according to claim 62 wherein
R¹ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl,
R² is p-methoxybenzyl, and
R³ is hydrogen or C₁-C₄ alkyl.

64. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein R⁴ is C₁₋₄ alkyl or a benzyl radical which is substituted by an electron-donating substituent.

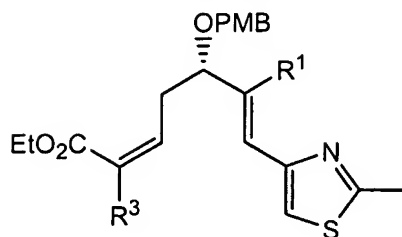
65. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein R⁴ is C₁₋₄ alkyl, p-methoxybenzyl or 2,4-dimethoxybenzyl.

66. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein R⁵ is bromine or iodine.

67. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein R¹ is CH₃.

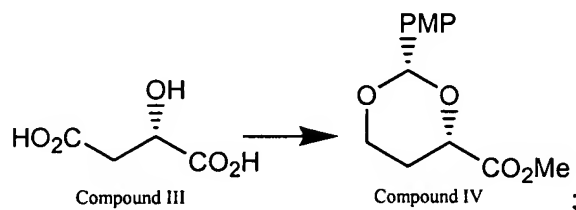
68. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein R^3 is CH_3 .
69. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein R^2 is p-methoxybenzyl (PMB).
70. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein Y is $COOR^4$.
71. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein Y is CO_2 - Ethyl.
72. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein Y is CH_2R^5 .
73. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 62, wherein R^3 is CH_3 .
74. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 62, wherein R^2 is p-methoxybenzyl (PMB).
75. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 62, wherein R^1 is CH_3 .
76. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein said compound is (5S,2Z,6E)-2,6-Dimethyl-5-[(4-ethoxyphenyl)-methoxy]-7-(2-methylthiazol-4-yl)hepta-2,6-dienoic acid-ethyl ester.
77. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein said compound is (5S,2Z,6E)-2,6-Dimethyl-5-[(4-methoxyphenyl)methoxy]-7-(2-methylthiazol-4-yl)hepta-2,6-dienol.
78. (Previously presented) A compound according to claim 59, wherein said compound is (5S,2Z,6E)-2,6-Dimethyl-2,3-epoxy-5-[(4-methoxyphenyl)-methoxy]-7-(2-methylthiazol-4-yl)hept-6-enol.

79. (Previously presented) A process for the preparation of a compound of formula IIa

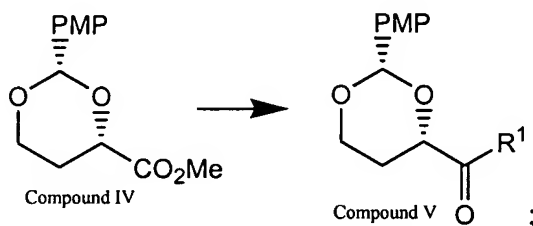


comprising:

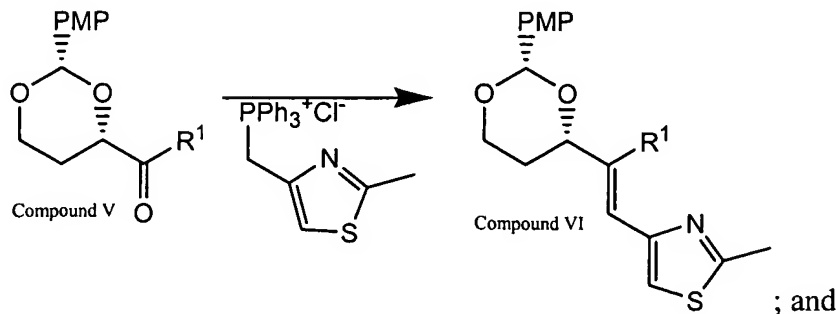
converting the .alpha.-hydroxy acid function with trifluoroacetic acid/methanol of (s)-maleic acid (III) to methyl ester, reducing the still present acid function with diborane in tetrahydrofuran to alcohol, and converting the (S)-(-)-methyl-2,4-dihydroxyester that is obtained with p-methoxybenzyldimethylacetal to the cyclic acetal (IV),



converting the methyl ester with a C₁-C₄ alkyl-organometallic compound to obtain the corresponding alkyl ketone (V),

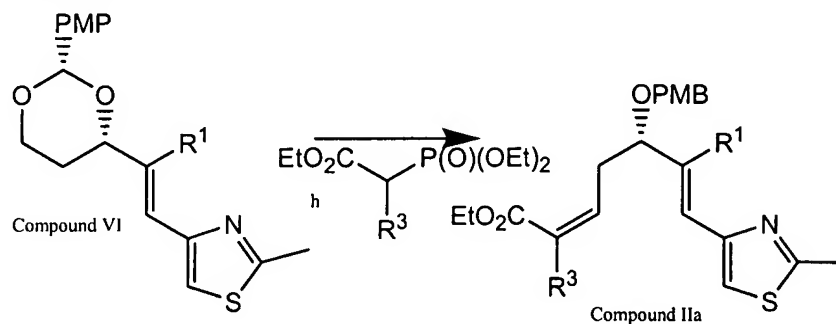


reacting the (C₁-C₄) alkyl ketone (V) in a Wittig reaction with the thiazolylphosphonium salt, and separating the E-isomer (VI),



converting the E-isomer (VI) by reaction with diisobutylaluminum hydride, by Swern oxidation, by Wadsworth-Homer-Emmons condensation with ethyl-2-

diethoxyphosphinylpropionate or by treatment with a Horner reagent that corresponds to R^3 , and/or by purification of E-isomers to the Z- α,β -unsaturated ester (IIa),

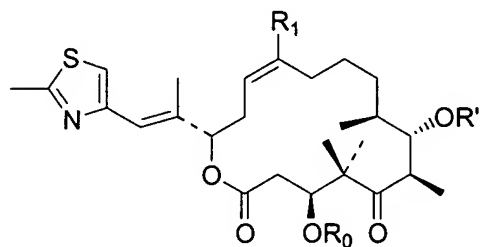


wherein

PMP is p-methoxyphenyl, and

PMB is p-methoxybenzyl.--

80. (New) A compound having the structure:



wherein R_1 is hydrogen or methyl, and R_0 and R' are each hydrogen.